

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 30430 01 OF 02 150226Z  
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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7351  
INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX  
AMCONSUL LYON  
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE  
AMCONSUL NICE  
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 30430

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINR, PGOV, FR  
SUBJECT: RENE MONORY: A MAN TO WATCH

SUMMARY. RENE MONORY, MINISTER OF ECONOMY, HAS DEVELOPED INTO ONE OF THE "STARS" OF THE PRESENT BARRE GOVERNMENT. HE IS WIDELY QUOTED, INTERVIEWED, AND IS RECEIVED AT THE ELYSEE ALMOST AS OFTEN AS BARRE. WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT HE COMBINES BARRE'S ECONOMICS WITH A CENTRIST, SOCIAL-REFORMIST POLITICAL BACKGROUND. PUBLICLY HE HAS MAINTAINED HIS IMAGE OF A "COMMON MAN" CONCERNED WITH DAY-TO-DAY PROBLEMS. HIS POPULARITY (INCLUDING AT THE ELYSEE) HAS BEEN COMMENTED ON, AND GISCARD HAS REPORTEDLY REMARKED THAT HE IS BETTER THAN RADAR FOR KNOWING THE "LITTLE PEOPLE." WHEN AND IF THE GOF PERCEIVES A NEED TO PROVIDE A MORE HUMAN FACE FOR ITS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES, MONORY'S MAY WELL BE THE FACE. HE IS DEFINITELY SOMEONE TO WATCH AND SOMEONE WHO COULD HAVE AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN FUTURE GOVERNMENTS. END SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 PARIS 30430 01 OF 02 150226Z

1. MECHANIC AND GARAGE OWNER, SELLER OF FARM IMPLEMENTS, SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATE, SMALL TOWN MAYOR, AND NOW MINISTER OF ECONOMY, RENE MONORY IS PROBABLY THE SECOND MOST IMPORTANT MAN IN THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT AFTER PRIME MINISTER BARRE; HE IS TOUTED AS A POTENTIAL SUCCESSOR. (GIVEN THE PRESENT BARRE/GISCARD RELATIONSHIP, WE CONSIDER THIS POSSIBILITY UNLIKELY IN THE NEAR FUTURE.)

LITTLE KNOWN TWO YEARS AGO WHEN HE WAS FIRST NAMED BY BARRE AS MINISTER OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND CRAFTS, MONORY HAS ESTABLISHED A SOLID REPUTATION BOTH AS AN ECONOMIC LIBERAL (IN KEEPING WITH BARRE'S POLICIES) AND AS AN EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATOR WITH A CLEARLY DEFINED PHILOSOPHY (HARD WORK AND WILL). HIS GOAL IS TO ESTABLISH AN ECONOMIC SYSTEM IN FRANCE BASED ON COMPETITION, INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE AND RESPONSIBILITY.

2. A POLITICIAN AMONG TECHNICIANS: IT IS A TESTAMENT TO MONORY'S ABILITIES THAT HE WAS APPOINTED MINISTER OF ECONOMY. LACKING EVEN A BACCALAUREAT, MONORY PRESIDES OVER THE ACADEMICALLY MOST DISTINGUISHED OF ALL THE MINISTRIES. AS MONORY HIMSELF HAS POINTED OUT, HE IS A POLITICAL ROLE. HE DID NOT COME TO TEACH ECONOMIC TECHNICIANS THEIR JOB, BUT RATHER TO INSERT A POLITICAL ELEMENT INTO THEIR ACTIVITIES: A TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITIES FROM THE GOF TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR. PRIVATE INDUSTRY MUST BE REMOVED FROM GOF TUTELAGE AND MADE TO TAKE UP ITS RESPONSIBILITIES TO MEET THE CHALLENGE OF COMPETITION. MONORY'S WATCHWORDS ARE LIBERTY AND RESPONSIBILITY, A PHILOSOPHY WHICH COMPLEMENTS BARRE'S EFFORTS TO RESTRUCTURE THE FRENCH ECONOMY INTO AN EFFICIENT, MODERN COMPETITOR IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE. SINCE HE LACKS BARRE'S ECONOMIC CREDENTIALS, MONORY'S ROLE IS PRIMARILY TO SUPPORT AND REINFORCE BARRE'S PROGRAM

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PAGE 03 PARIS 30430 01 OF 02 150226Z

RATHER THAN TO MAKE POLICY. HE IS A HIGHLY COMPETENT ADMINISTRATOR, HOWEVER, AND HIS BACKGROUND AS A SMALL BUSINESSMAN, MAYOR AND REPORTER OF THE SENATE'S COMMISSION ON FINANCES GIVES HIM A THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF THE EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC POLICY, IF NOT THE THEORY.

3. THE BEAR, THE SHERIFF, THE TROJAN HORSE: ALL THREE OF THESE NICKNAMES HAVE BEEN APPLIED TO MONORY. HE IS PHYSICALLY BIG, SOMEWHAT HEAVY IN MANNER, INDEPENDENT AND DETERMINED. THE NICKNAME OF THE "BEAR" REFLECTS A SURFACE IMPRESSION OF MONORY IN STYLE AND PHYSICAL APPEARANCE. THE "SHERIFF" REFLECTS HIS AUTHORITARIAN DISPOSITION AND GIVES SOME FLAVOR TO HIS 19 YEARS AS MAYOR. WHILE POPULAR WITH HIS STAFF, MONORY IS USED TO GIVING ORDERS AND HAVING THEM CARRIED OUT. AS ONE JOURNALIST NOTED, HE IS AN OPINIONATED MAN WITH GOOD SENSE. HIS NOMINATION TO THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY BROUGHT THE SOBRIQUET OF THE "TROJAN HORSE": A COMMON MAN IN THE HALLS OF THE MOST SOPHISTICATED MINISTRY; AN INDIVIDUALIST LEADING THE MINISTRY MOST NOTORIOUS FOR ITS PERVASIVE CONTROL; A LEADER OF THE ELITE FINANCIAL CORPS WHO BASES HIS APPEAL ON HIS COMMON ORIGINS AND HIS AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE COMMON

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PAGE 01 PARIS 30430 02 OF 02 150227Z  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 30430

MAN. MONORY PERCEIVES HIS PRIMARY TASK AT THE MINISTRY AS ONE OF INCREASING ITS POLITICAL RESPONSIVENESS. COMMENTING ON THE FUTURE OF THE PRICE CONTROL DIRECTORATE (HISTORICALLY ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL BUREAUS IN THE GOVERNMENT), FOR EXAMPLE, MONORY SAID THAT ITS NEW JOB WOULD BE TO INSURE COMPETITION. HE HAS ALSO EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO INCREASE CONSUMER INFORMATION AND TO PROVIDE

SERVICES TO THE SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED BUSINESSES HE KNOWS SO WELL.

4. A STRONG POLITICAL FIGURE: A MEMBER OF THE DIRECTING BOARD OF THE CENTRIST CDS PARTY (PART OF THE UDF), MONORY HAS AN ESTABLISHED POLITICAL BASE. THE CDS PROGRAM HAS A HIGH SOCIAL REFORM CONTENT AND IS IN FACT DESIGNED TO APPEAL TO THE CENTER-LEFT AS WELL AS CENTER-RIGHT ELECTORATE. MONORY HAS DEMONSTRATED HIS VOTE-GETTING CAPACITY, BEING ELECTED MAYOR OF HIS HOME TOWN,  
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PAGE 02 PARIS 30430 02 OF 02 150227Z

GENERAL COUNCILLOR OF HIS CANTON, AND SENATOR FROM HIS DEPARTMENT. HE HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY REELECTED TO EACH OF THESE POSITIONS. HE HAS DEMONSTRATED HIS ABILITIES AS A MINISTER WHILE MAINTAINING HIS IMAGE AS A "COMMON MAN". HE IS AN "ATLANTICIST" AND A STRONG SUPPORTER OF GISCARD'S FOREIGN POLICY. HIS PRESENCE IN THE BARRE GOVERNMENT HAS BROUGHT WITH IT SOME CRITICISM, BUT THE CRITICISM LACKS MUCH OF THE ABUSIVE STING AIMED AT OTHER MINISTERS AND GOF OFFICIALS. (MANY OF THE PERSONAL CUTS REFLECT MONORY'S LACK OF FORMAL EDUCATION AND SOMETIMES GLIB ANALYSES.)

5. A RECENT FLAP INVOLVING MONORY AND BARRE IS ILLUSTRATIVE OF MONORY'S THINKING AND MODE OF OPERATION. DURING THE LULL AT THE END OF THE SUMMER (BARRE WAS OUT OF TOWN), MONORY ANNOUNCED HIS INTENT TO REDUCE GASOLINE PRICES (REFLECTING THE FALL IN THE DOLLAR VIS-A-VIS THE FRANC). HE THUS INTENDED TO PASS ALONG THE SAVINGS TO THE CONSUMER -- A SOLID EXAMPLE OF HONEST PRICING, HIS CONCERN FOR THE PROBLEMS OF THE COMMON MAN AND A GOOD POLITICAL PITCH. BARRE COUNTERMANDED THE ORDER, HOWEVER, SAYING THAT THE GOF WOULD KEEP THE FUNDS TO OFFSET PROJECTED PETROLEUM PRICE INCREASES AND, IN THE INTERIM, TO FINANCE CONSUMER ORIENTED PROGRAMS -- I.E., THE GOF NEEDS THE MONEY. WHILE HIS REVERSAL BY BARRE MAY HAVE BEEN EMBARRASSING AND PERHAPS REFLECTED A RATHER FACILE APPROACH TO FISCAL POLICY, IT UNDOUBTEDLY DID LITTLE TO HARM HIS IMAGE AS A POLITICIAN OUT TO HELP THE CONSUMER.

6. MONORY IS NOT KNOWN FOR HIS LEANINGS TOWARD GISCARD'S POLICY OF SEEKING A REAPPROACHMENT WITH THE MODERATE OPPOSITION. HIS INTEGRITY, IMAGE AND CENTRIST POLITICS WOULD NEVERTHELESS APPEAR TO MAKE HIM AT LEAST AS CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 PARIS 30430 02 OF 02 150227Z

ACCEPTABLE AS OTHER GISCARDIAN LEADERS TO THAT ONE TO TWO PERCENT OF THE OPPOSITION'S ELECTORATE THOUGHT RECUPERABLE BY THE MAJORITY. PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOWEVER, MONORY CAN APPEAL TO MANY OF THE SAME AVERAGE FRENCHMEN AS THE GAULLIST RPR.

7.....BUT WITH REAL DRAWBACKS: AS IS TRUE WITH MANY POLITICIANS, MONORY'S STRENGTHS ARE ALSO HIS WEAKNESSES. HIS STRONG IDENTIFICATION WITH LIBERAL ECONOMIC DOCTRINE AND EMPHASIS ON INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY AND RESPONSIBILITY HAVE A MIXED APPEAL IN A COUNTRY WITH AN HISTORICALLY PATERNALISTIC TRADITION AND A STRONG LEFT ELECTORATE. HIS COMMON

MAN IMAGE AND LACK OF FORMAL EDUCATION, WHILE APPEALING TO THE FRENCH EGALITARIAN SPIRIT, DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE QUALITIES DESIRED IN A PRIME MINISTER OF FRANCE. THUS, WHILE HIGHLY CAPABLE AND POLITICALLY USEFUL, MONORY LACKS THAT ELITENESS OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL POSITION WHICH HAS TRADITIONALLY MARKED FRANCE'S LEADERS, AND THIS MISSING LINK COULD MAKE HIS EFFORTS TO LEAD AND DIRECT THE COUNTRY VERY DIFFICULT.

8. CONCLUSION: RENE MONORY HAS ABILITY AND DEFINITE POLITICAL APPEAL. HE IS POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY OF THE SAME SCHOOL AS GISCARD AND BARRE. HIS SOCIAL ORIGINS COMPENSATE FOR GISCARD'S ARISTOCRATIC BACKGROUND. HIS MANNER, POLITICAL BACKGROUND AND EXPRESSED CONCERN FOR THE PROBLEMS OF THE COMMON MAN CONTRAST WITH BARRE'S RIGOROUS, ACADEMIC, ALOOF APPROACH. MONORY MAY BE AN UNLIKELY CANDIDATE TO REPLACE BARRE IN THE NEAR FUTURE, BUT HE COULD AT SOME POINT BECOME A HANDY SYMBOL TO APPEAL TO A FRENCH ELECTORATE PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH THE PROBLEMS OF DAY-TO-DAY LIVING.  
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